The main errors of the New Mass

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We have dedicated the last two Sundays to considering the ends and fruits of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Today, on this Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, we shall examine the principal theological errors of the "Novus Ordo Missae"—the Montinian Mass.

The gravest criticism leveled against Paul VI's missal concerns the profession of the Catholic Faith.

The rite itself—in its gestures and words, in its entirety and in its details—alters the Catholic Faith.

In their cover letter for the "Short Critical Study", Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci stated:

"The new "Ordo Missae"—if one considers the new elements, open to widely divergent interpretations, that appear within it as implied or presupposed—departs strikingly, both as a whole and in its details, from the Catholic theology of the Holy Mass as formulated during the 22nd Session of the Council of Trent. That Council, by definitively establishing the canons of the rite, erected an insurmountable barrier against any heresy that might threaten the integrity of the Mystery."

Most serious of all is that the "Novus Ordo" does not directly contradict the faith... rather, it obscures, silences, stifles, and suffocates it.

To understand this, four references—among others—will suffice:

1) Regarding the Faith and its mysteries in general

2) Regarding the sacred nature of the mysteries

3) The suppression of the sacrificial aspect

4) The diminution of faith in the Real Presence

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1) Regarding the Faith and its mysteries in general

The purpose of the rite is to instruct priests and the faithful and to dispose them for the worship of God by presenting the Truths of the Faith.
Let us recall the famous theological adage "*lex credendi*, *lex orandi*" ("the law of belief is the law of prayer"), which has served for centuries as a doctrinal barometer, illustrating that the Church's official prayers and rites are expressions of her Faith and Theology. The law of faith establishes the law of prayer, and not the other way around.
It is clear that God can be honored through the liturgy if one possesses, beforehand, incorruptible faith, steadfast hope, and genuine charity.
It must be clear that the Liturgy in general, and the Mass in particular, can only foster and nourish the Faith in those who already possess it.
Now, what is the faith of those who, following Vatican II's "Nostra Aetate", acknowledge all religions? What is the hope of those who adhere to the teachings of "Gaudium et Spes" from that "conciliabulum"? What is the charity of those who distort the seven Sacraments?

Let us see how, in the new rite, numerous truths are altered or obscured through the suppression of prayers:

The Sin:

The "Novus Ordo Missae" (NOM) no longer contains the prayers "*Indulgentiam*", "*Aufer a nobis*", "*Oramus te*", "*Deus qui humanæ*", and "*Suscipe sancte Pater*", all of which recall man's sinful condition.

Contempt for worldly things:

On July 2, 1977, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre said: "In this new missal, they have changed all the prayers—all the petitions—that spoke of despising the things of this world in order to unite ourselves with heavenly things. What idea did those who changed these things have? Are heavenly things not such that we ought to despise earthly things, which are for us an occasion of sin?"

Spiritual combat:

In a spiritual conference at the Écône Seminary on June 25, 1981, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre said: "Everything in the prayers that indicated struggle or spiritual combat has been suppressed. Terms like 'persecutors' and 'enemies'—all of that has been removed."
The mystery of Redemption: "Salvation" is spoken of in a very vague manner.

The perpetual virginity of the Virgin Mary:

In the NOM, it is possible—depending on the selection of prayers used—to avoid mentioning the Virgin Mary altogether. And it is well known that Mary's perpetual virginity is a stumbling block for Protestants... In fact, the word "perpetual" appears in only one of the four Eucharistic Prayers. By contrast, the ancient rite reiterates this dogma at least five times.

Faith in the Last Things:

In the aforementioned conference, Archbishop Lefebvre added: "The rite for the dead has been modified. The word "anima" [soul] has frequently disappeared from many prayers for the deceased because, under the influence of new philosophies, it is no longer truly known whether there is a real distinction between soul and body. Consequently, one is no longer supposed to speak of the soul. It is incredible, unimaginable! There is no longer any devotion to the dead; the sense of Purgatory no longer exists."

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2) Regarding the sacred aspect of the mysteries

The rubrics of the Missal themselves foster this loss of the sense of the sacred through the constant mutability of the rite and a general liturgical laxity.

The constant mutability of the rite alters its sacred character, if only through the variety of options for the Mass: the first part of the Mass has three formulas, the second has three, and the Canon has four. Thus, each priest can construct "his own" Mass according to a combination of 3 × 3 × 4—thirty-six possibilities.

And this is limiting the scope to the words alone, without counting the gestures and other ceremonies that can be added or invented at will by parish councils.

Granting the priest and his parish council almost total freedom regarding gestures, along with significant collective initiative concerning the texts of the Mass, inevitably breeds a loss of respect for the rite itself.

Indeed, imagination or whimsy rarely go hand in hand with a sense of reverence. In contrast, the use of a rite that has been fixed and established for some fifteen centuries—and codified in detail regarding both words and gestures—engenders profound respect on the part of both the priest and the faithful.

The most elementary pedagogical rule for teaching the sacred nature of an object is not to place it in everyone's hands and to forbid its alteration at the whim of the users.

As for the general liturgical laxity, it stems from the abandonment and suppression of many signs of reverence, specifically:

– The altar stone; the precious nature of the sacred vessels; the use of a single altar cloth instead of three; or the omission of certain vestments (the maniple, the amice, the cincture, the chalice veil, the burse, and even the chasuble itself). – The genuflections, the number of which drops from 12 to 2, and the Signs of the Cross, which go from 47 to 7.

– The number of prayers, which reduces the duration of the Mass—in its shortest form—to 10 or 12 minutes.

Monsignor Lefebvre astutely observed this: the desacralization occurs primarily:

– Through the use of the vernacular. The suppression of the sacred language—Latin —has, in a sense, rendered the Holy Mass profane and transformed it into something that is no longer truly sacred.

– Through the practice of speaking aloud throughout the entire Mass. There are no longer moments of silence, nor words spoken in a low voice by the priest to invite meditation on the great mystery taking place.

– Through the replacement of the Altar with a table.

– Through the priest's positioning. Celebrating Mass facing the people does nothing to foster recollection in the face of the unfolding mystery. The priest himself is distracted by the people before him, and the people are distracted by the priest—especially if he acts in a somewhat animated, disorderly, or irreverent manner.

– Through the distribution of the Eucharist by the laity.

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3) The suppression of the sacrificial aspect

The heretic Martin Luther published his "*Formulæ missæ et communionis*" in 1523; a liturgical treatise published in Latin to reform worship in Wittenberg. Among other things, he eliminated the Offertory and the Canon of the Mass, rejected the idea of sacrifice, and introduced communion under both species. There, he stated:

The Mass is not a sacrifice... let us call it a blessing, the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper... let it be given any other name one wishes, provided it is not sullied with the title of sacrifice. That abomination called the Offertory... From there, the entire sacrificial character resounds and is felt.

As a consequence of the interference of six Protestant pastors and Protestantized Catholics, the "Novus Ordo Missae" (NOM) manifests itself as a meal (the Lord's Supper) rather than a sacrifice.
This elimination is carried out and manifested in four ways:

a) Through the suppression of the Offertory

In Catholic doctrine, the purpose of the Offertory is to define the sacrificial character of the Mass—namely, the offering of the Body and Blood of Our Lord in expiation for our sins. The Offertory is thus:

– the anticipatory offering of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ,

– made to God the Father,

– presented by the priest,

– in expiation for our sins.

The traditional Offertory develops these points without any ambiguity.

This is no longer the case with the new offertory, which is not the anticipatory offering of the Body and Blood of Christ, but rather a prayer based on a Jewish blessing [It is the famous prayer: “Blessed are you, Lord, God of the Universe, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life”].

The same applies to the wine. We shall return to this subject, God willing, in a fortnight.

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b) Due to the omission of any mention of propitiatory sacrifice

Prayers that explicitly express the idea of propitiation—such as those of the Offertory and those recited by the priest before Communion—have been suppressed…

The term "sacrifice" is entirely absent from Eucharistic Prayer II (known as the Prayer of St. Hippolytus), which is the most widely used due to its brevity.

A diminished sense of sacrifice is thus evident in the new rite, because the term "sacrifice" itself is rarely used; and when it is employed, it is used in the Protestant manner—since Protestants accept the term "sacrifice" for the Mass, but only as a sacrifice of praise or thanksgiving, and not as a propitiatory one.

The Council of Trent issued the following condemnation:

"If anyone says that the Sacrifice of the Mass is merely one of praise and thanksgiving, or a simple commemoration of the sacrifice accomplished on the Cross, but not propitiatory; or that it profits only the one who receives it and ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities: let him be anathema."

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c) Due to the narrative style of the Consecration, which suggests a commemorative account rather than a liturgical action.

The famous Note 15 of the "Short Critical Study" reads as follows:

“The words of Consecration, given the way they are inserted into the context of the "Novus Ordo", may be valid due to the subjective efficacy of the minister's intention. Yet they may also be invalid, insofar as they no longer possess that validity by the very force of the words—or, more precisely, by the objective power of the mode of signification they held until now in the Mass. Consequently, will priests who, in the near future, have not been instructed according to traditional doctrine—and who simply rely on the "Novus Ordo" with the intention of ‘doing what the Church does’—actually consecrate validly? It is legitimate to doubt this.

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d) Regarding the liturgical gestures themselves

Archbishop Lefebvre, in conferences given at the Écône Seminary in 1979 and 1981, stated:

“To analyze the new rite, one must not consider only the texts; one must also take into account all the postures and new gestures: the genuflections, the signs of the cross, the bows, and even the changes regarding the objects used.

Everything has been transformed! There are no more genuflections, no more signs of the cross! It is abominable! The sign of the cross clearly showed that the Sacrifice of the Cross was taking place. Let us not say that these are mere details. They are not details.” “These are gestures that carry meaning and value.”

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4) The decline of faith in the Real Presence

The primary criticism leveled against the Missal of Paul VI concerns the profession of the Catholic faith. The rite itself—in its gestures and words, in its entirety as well as in its details—alters the Catholic faith. One recalls the adage "*lex credendi, lex orandi*"…

The "Short Critical Study of the Novus Ordo Missae" states:

“The reason why the Sacrifice is not indicated with sufficient explicitness in the "Novus Ordo" is that the Real Presence has lost its truly central place (so splendidly evident in the ancient Mass).”

Only one mention is made—specifically, the single footnote drawn from the Council of Trent—referring to the Real Presence as nourishment. Yet, there is never any indication of the Real and Permanent Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ, together with His Soul and Divinity, which exists under the species following transubstantiation. Moreover, the very word "Transubstantiation" is completely ignored.

Furthermore, the reason for suppressing the invocation of the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity ("Come, Sanctifier...")—by which the Holy Spirit was implored to descend upon the prepared offerings to work the miracle of the Divine Presence, just as He once did in the womb of the Blessed Virgin—is objectively the same: that is, it belongs to the same type of silence and tacit denial, and indeed to the ongoing chain of denials regarding the Real Presence.

Also abolished are:

a) genuflections, of which only three remain for the priest and one for the people at the moment of Consecration (and even this one is subject to many exceptions);

b) the ablutions of the fingers over the chalice;

c) the preservation of those same fingers from any profane contact after the Consecration;

d) the purification of the sacred vessels, which is no longer mandated to take place immediately after consuming the contents of the chalice, nor upon the corporal itself;

e) the pall, used to protect the Most Precious Blood of Christ within the chalice;

f) the gilding of the sacred vessels;

g) the consecration of the portable altar;

h) the altar stone and relics in the portable altar—and even on the altar table itself whenever the celebration takes place in non-sacred locations. With this exception admitted, the way is opened for "Eucharistic suppers" in private homes;

i) the three altar cloths, of which only one is now prescribed;

j) the thanksgiving, which was to be made kneeling, and which is replaced by a clumsy thanksgiving performed by the priest and the faithful while seated; add to this that Holy Communion is received irreverently by the faithful while standing;

k) finally, the ancient, holy prescriptions regarding a consecrated Host that has fallen to the ground, which are now reduced—in a paltry manner—to merely this: "the Host is to be taken up reverently."

All these things taken together, and their repetition, offensively manifest and confirm an implicit denial of the Faith in the most august dogma of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

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For all these reasons and many others, one cannot in good conscience attend the new Mass, whether in Latin or in english, and whether celebrated facing the people or facing the Tabernacle.

And therefore, for these same reasons, one must attend only the Traditional Mass—the Mass of all time.